(b) No, Sir Government has not sent such a communication to the US authorities. Government has made it clear on numerous occasions that it is discussing the understanding on nuclear issues with the US Administration and not the US Congress.

(c) Does not arise.

Demilitarisation of J&K

434. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan has made a formal proposal for demilitarisation of Jammu and Kashmir and for self rule there;

(b) if so, the details of the proposals made; and

(c) the response of Government to these proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Pakistan raised it during the recent Foreign Secretary level talks held in New Delhi on 17-18 January 2006.

(c) Any demilitarization or redeployment of security forces within the territory of India is a sovereign decision of the Government of India and cannot be dictated by any foreign government. Such decisions are based on our assessment of the security situation prevailing in any particular part of the country. As long as the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir and indeed in other parts of the country is adversely affected by the phenomenon of cross-border terrorism and violence perpetrated by Pakistan-based terrorist groups, the Government of India will fulfill its responsibility to safeguard the lives and security of its citizens.

President Musharraf has repeatedly given solemn assurances that no part of the territory under Pakistan's control would be used for any cross-border terrorism against India. The implementation of this commitment is unconditional. Our aim should be to establish peace and tranquility all along the India-Pakistan border and all along the LoC so that there is no need for the two countries to deploy troops in proximity to one another.

Self-governance is embedded in our Constitution and our consciousness. Jammu and Kashmir already enjoys autnomy under the Indian Constitutiion and has in place a democratically elected government. Our system has the flexibility to accommodate even groups who have remained outside the political process. Government is willing to hold discussions with all groups or individuals who shun the path of violence. On the other hand, there is only nominal autonomy in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and there has been no popular election in Gilgit and Baltistan, which does not even have a legal/constitutional status.

We are willing to hear from Pakistan what steps would be taken for the creation of representative institutions on the other side of the Line of Control (LoC). These representative institutions on either side of the LoC can work together in areas of common concern and issues, like tourism promotion, environment, among others. However, as Prime Minister has stated, on several occasions, there can be no redrawing of boundaries, transfer of territory or another partition of the country.

Purchase of oil fields in Syria

†435. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that U.S.A. has raised her objection on oil field purchase by India in Syria;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereon;

(c) whether keeping in view the national interests Government would allow companies engaged in the field of oil production to purchase oil fields in Syria; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The matter was raised informally by the U.S.

(b) The Government rejects any such objection.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.